

"BAD DREAMS"

Screenplay
by
Andrew Fleming

Story
by
Andrew Fleming,
Michael Dick,
Yuri Zeltzer,
and P.J. Pettiette.

FADE IN TITLE:

1969

FADE OUT TITLE.

FADE UP -

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SUNSET

A serene landscape, mist collecting as the red ball of a sun dips behind the mountains.

In the middle of a field stands a man facing the sunset. He is HARRIS, fortyish, greying but handsome. His hands are outstretched as if embracing an invisible entity. He is filled with some sort of transcendental power.

INT. COMMON ROOM - SUNSET

This was probably the stately parlor of a wealthy landowner in its day, but now it labors under the strain of shoddy patchwork repairs. There is a funky assembly of odd hand-made furniture. There are muslin curtains on the windows, crude paintings, and quilts covering ripped chairs and couches. Despite the squalor, there is a neatness to the place.

The room is filled with 30 or so PEOPLE sitting anywhere they can with the seemingly sole purpose of being physically close to each other. The Women and the Men have mostly long hair. The Women wear simple dresses and skirts, the Men, workshirts and jeans. They are what we today would call hippies, not the ornate and stylish variety, but simple and earthy. All of them have blissful expressions. There are a few CHILDREN and a BABY in a WOMAN'S arms.

Harris comes in and smiles at everyone with an uncontrollable inner joy. They reach to touch him as he passes. Some of the group start hugging each other. A MAN strokes a CHILD'S face lovingly. Everyone is beaming with bliss.

Something wonderful is about to happen.

Harris goes to a mismatched row of pails and buckets on a table and picks one up. He starts ladeling a clear orangey liquid over some of the people. As he does they seem refreshed, as if baptized. Harris empties one pail and continues with another. The Woman receives the liquid in her hand and pours it over the baby in her arms. Some of the people whisper gentle things to each other.

One young blonde woman, CYNTHIA, watches Harris' movements. As he nears her with the pail, an inward sense of panic develops. A MAN with a ponytail next to Cynthia notices her

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

anxiety. He clasps her hand firmly and smiles. She is scared. Harris finishes by dousing the central rug with the remainder of the liquid. Everything and everyone is soaked with it including himself. He sits back down in his position. He looks into their eyes. They are all, except perhaps Cynthia, gorgeously focused on him. They fall silent, but the baby has started to cry fussily. The Woman makes a soft attempt to hush it.

Harris picks up a matchbox and takes out a match. He lights it and holds it fourth.

HARRIS

I love you all so much.

They are in ecstasy at his words.

He drops the match on the rug. Flames spread like snakes. Harris is immediately engulfed in fire.

The baby's crying is horrific, but everyone else sits still, completely silent and waiting. Two figures, already ablaze, embrace. The Man next to Cynthia touches a WOMAN on fire and his hand is suddenly engulfed. He looks at Cynthia lovingly and proffers his burning limb. She is horrified. She quickly backs away.

Then everything explodes. Cynthia is tossed away from the group with scraps of wood and furniture into the

INT. FOYER AREA -

She is knocked unconscious and cut somewhat but, as yet, she isn't burned. Beyond her, in the common room, we see the rest of the people engulfed in flames. Another concussion of flames forces some of the structure to collapse. Cynthia is buried under pieces of plaster from the ceiling.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

We distantly hear the baby's cry, but then it stops. Other than the flames filling the windowpanes, the quaint old country house is calm. There's a rundown old Ford pickup in the dirt driveway, flower-boxes in the windows, a hand-cranked water well, and a sign that reads, 'Unity House.'

Suddenly there is another shockingly loud blast of flames as we

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Helicopters whirr overhead and SIRENS screech as engines pull up. The place is a blur of activity. POLICE and FIREMEN are everywhere. There are several TV NEWS TEAMS around. REPORTERS are barking questions at the Police. ONLOOKERS gather.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

The fire is generally contained by now but sparks are floating up and around, and much of the collapsing house is still aglow with heat.

There is a row of more than a dozen bodybags lined up along a path in front.

A FIREMAN darts out what was once the entrance.

FIREMAN

We found one! She's alive!

More Firemen rush up frantically. PARAMEDICS rush over with a stretcher.

INT. FOYER -

Everything is collapsed except the skeleton of the structure, but underneath a pile of rubble is Cynthia's body. She looks virtually unharmed. The Firemen work to get her out.

A POLICE CAPTAIN approaches the Firemen.

CAPTAIN

What about the rest?

The Fireman just looks at him.

CAPTAIN

Jesus.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

Paramedics whisk the stretcher with Cynthia on it past Onlookers and Reporters into the waiting ambulance. The TV News crews rush up. The TV Reporters shout, 'Is she alive?', 'What about the others?'

The ambulance doors slam shut, and it pulls out full throttle, leaving the crowds on a cloud of dust.

MUSIC IN FULL - A gritty frenetic piece from the late 60's like 'Magic Carpet Ride' by Steppenwolf.

CREDIT SEQUENCE BEGINS superimposed over.

The ambulance speeds off into the night.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

The house is still aglow with orangey smoke and glowing embers lifted off by the night air. It seems almost alive.

EXT. HIGHWAY -

WITH THE AMBULANCE the lights and sirens are whirring and screeching, cutting through the dark country like a chainsaw.

INSIDE THE AMBULANCE Paramedics perform emergency treatments on Cynthia, administering oxygen, bandaging open wounds, monitoring pulse and respiration. We see her face occasionally with the passing light. She is pretty.

MUSIC CONTINUES as the ambulance pulls up to

EXT. EMERGENCY ENTRANCE TO HOSPITAL -

We are close on her as she is jerkily maneuvered into the hospital. PARAMEDICS, NURSES and DOCTORS all rush around her crazily. There are PHOTOGRAPHERS a ways off taking flash pictures.

CONTINUE into

INT. EMERGENCY WARD -

She is rushed down hallways into the trauma center room where Doctors descend on her.

A SERIES OF SHOTS depicting Cynthia undergoing all kinds of emergency procedure for respiratory problems, cuts, bruises, some burns. She seems a frail creature in the midst of this bloody mess, with tubes down her throat, needles puncturing her skin, bandages being applied, suture being sewn.

THE MUSIC SHIFTS to a more ethereal sound of sitars and reverberating guitars as the girl is wheeled into

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A long shaft of light from the door illuminates her lying in bed unconscious. Once the Nurses have finished they all leave the room closing the door. Everything is black.

Suddenly, outside the room's window we see the sun rise at an accelerated speed by virtue of time lapse photography. It becomes day. After a few seconds the sun sets, and soon it is night. The phenomenon repeats itself over and over. Day and night

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

pass with the seconds. Occasionally we catch a glimpse of DR. BERRISFORD, a somber man in his late thirties. He watches Cynthia. She never stirs.

THE MUSIC BUILDS as the coming and going of the sun turns into a flashing strobe of time passing.

END CREDIT SEQUENCE

FADE OUT

FADE UP TITLE:

1987

FADE OUT TITLE.

FADE IN

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

It is the same room but it has been updated slightly with newer pictures, more contemporary furniture and sleek venetian blinds.

Cynthia lies in the bed, unconscious.

INT. HALLWAY -

Dr. Berrisford, noticeably older now, moves down the corridor with an air of someone in power. He wears a suit rather than a doctor's coat. A number of NURSES and DOCTORS say hello to him.

He passes the room that contains Cynthia. He stops suddenly and turns to go in.

INT. CYNTHIA'S HOSPITAL ROOM -

He stands at the foot of the bed and stares at her. He goes to the window and opens it, letting in a breeze. As he faces out, Cynthia stirs slightly, shifting her head and breathing a little heavier. Without looking at her, he turns to go. But at the door he hears a distinctly conscious breath, so he turns to her.

Cynthia's eyes open.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Dr. Berrisford is transfixed, motionless, watching her. She moves her head slightly in order to look around. Groggily, she sees him at the door.

DR. BERRISFORD
Hello Cynthia.

She sighs with utter fatigue and lays her head back down on the pillow.

We are assaulted by a barrage of photo flashes, cameras CLICKING.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM -

Cynthia is being led in on a wheelchair. She is deposited behind a table at the front of the room facing a throng of about 35 REPORTERS and TV NEWS PEOPLE. She seems fazed, but she looks well. She tries to smile while an august DOCTOR, somewhat grandly, reads a statement to the press. Berrisford sits nearby.

DOCTOR
...that, combined with the comatose state which, as I said before was not unlike a state of suspended animation, helped to maintain her functions in remarkably good condition.

BERRISFORD
Apart from some memory loss there really is no material damage to her mentally. BUT all the insulatory injections, all the medical technology in the world wouldn't make as much difference as her own genetic makeup...

DOCTOR
Indeed.

They are all watching Cynthia.

REPORTER 1
Cynthia, how do you feel?

CYNTHIA
Fine.

Just then a young doctor, ALEX GOLDMAN, comes in behind all the press. A SECURITY GUARD stops him. Alex shows him his hospital badge. He peers at Cynthia from in between the cameras and lights. He is intrigued by her.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

REPORTER 1

What are your plans?

CYNTHIA

I'm just sort of taking it
a day at a time.

REPORTER 2

Cynthia, there was some
uncertainty as to how the fire
that destroyed the Unity House
got started.

Cynthia stops momentarily.

CYNTHIA

I really can't remember anything
about that.

BERRISFORD

As was stated, as with any
unconsciousness, especially such
a prolonged one, loss of memory
is expected.

REPORTER 2

Do you remember anything at all
about the fire? Is it possible
that someone could have set it
purposefully?

CYNTHIA

I don't know. I can't remember it.
I'm sorry.

The questions and answers continue, but the voices come across
over a TV as we

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Cynthia is being wheeled down the hallway by Dr. Berrisford. She
sees herself on TV.

CYNTHIA

Wait, that's me.

They pull up and watch. Several NURSES and ORDERLIES are watching
too. They don't see Cynthia and Berrisford behind them.

(CONT.)

REPORTER 3 (on TV)

Do you have any impressions about how the world has changed since then?

CYNTHIA (on TV)

No. I mean, I wouldn't know. I just know about where I was.

REPORTER 4 (on TV)

What kind of place was the Unity House? Do you remember that?

CYNTHIA (on TV)

Yes, I do... It was very... close. We all felt that if people could become selfless enough, if they could free themselves from all the ego-related resistance, they would experience one another with a kind of one-ness. Unity. That's where the name came from. Everything we did, all the chores, everything we said all day, was meant to bring us closer. Total togetherness. That's what we wanted.

One of the ORDERLIES watching the TV begins to chuckle.

ORDERLY (sarcastic)

Groovy, man.

Some others laugh. Cynthia hears him. He still doesn't see her behind him. She is hurt.

CYNTHIA (on TV)

We weren't trying to change the world. We were just trying to love each other as much as we could.

REPORTER 4 (on TV)

Did it ever all come together?

Cynthia is silent for a moment.

CYNTHIA

I think so. I would like
to think so.

A FEMALE NEWSCASTER comes on the screen.

NEWSCASTER

Cynthia Becker was part of
an experimental commune which
was destroyed in a fire in 1969,
killing 32 inhabitants.

The TV screen cuts to rather grainy footage of the Unity House
burning, firehoses dousing the structure. 'FILE FOOTAGE' is keyed
over on the bottom of the TV screen.

NEWSCASTER (on TV - offscreen)

The story received much attention
because it was believed that
the comatose patient could
provide information on the
cause of the blaze, though
arson was suspected.

On the TV screen we cut back to the Newscaster.

NEWSCASTER (on TV - cont.)

Doctors are keeping her at
Mountainview for observation.

Onscreen the Newscaster begins another story about an oil embargo.

Cynthia turns away from the screen with a wan, drawn expression.
Berrisford starts to pull her back away from the group around
the TV.

BERRISFORD

How does it feel to be a
celebrity?

Cynthia doesn't respond.

BERRISFORD

Cynthia, I'm sure you're eager
to get out in the world and
start a life of your own but,
beyond the physical therapy,
I think you should consider
staying in the hospital here
for a length of time.

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA

Why?

BERRISFORD

I want you to be part of a
special project of mine.

CYNTHIA

What kind of project?

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia wheels into the bright room. It has a view of the city beyond, visible through the blinds. There are about eight PEOPLE all sitting in a very loose circle of chairs. Alex is standing by the far window. He approaches.

CYNTHIA

I'm Cynthia.

ALEX

Yes, I know. Welcome.

The group stares at her without the slightest trace of warmth.

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The session is in progress, but every one is completely silent. Alex looks around at them hopefully. MIRIAM, a slender pant-suited woman in her fifties, chainsmokes. Cynthia notices GILDA, a strange-looking creature with long, frizzy hair. Gilda is staring at Cynthia with an intensity that makes Cynthia look away.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

11.

ALEX
Anybody...?

Silence.

ALEX
I can't believe that no
one has anything to
contribute.

The rotund ED sits back and sighs. He seems determined not to say anything. Cynthia leans forward self-consciously.

CYNTHIA
Uh....

ALEX
Yes, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
Well I was thinking that
sometimes making physical
contact helps release
energies. I mean, we could
hold hands in a circle.

Alex seems to like the idea, but the rest of the group is dubious.

ED
We've never done that before.

ALEX
No reason why we can't give
it a try.

They look unconvinced. Miriam stamps out her cigarette.

MIRIAM
Oh, why not?

She grabs hands on either side of her. Alex does too. Gradually, reluctantly, everyone follows.

CYNTHIA
We can close our eyes too.
Sometimes that helps.

Everyone closes their eyes.

Gradually we see all the tenseness, the divisiveness ebb away. Ed relaxes. RALPH, a wirey, slightly schizoid-looking character,

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

stops fidgeting. Even Alex seems lost in a trance. But Gilda, the wild, frizzy-haired one, opens her eyes and stares at Cynthia. Cynthia senses this. She opens her eyes and sees Gilda, gaze riveted, eyes wide with intensity. Cynthia is frightened of her.

Suddenly LANA, a thin, pale, Asian-American girl gasps and leans forward. Everyone opens their eyes.

ALEX
Lana? Are you alright?

Lana nods.

ALEX
Do you want to talk?

She has buried her face in her hands, overwhelmed by something. CONNIE, a petite, chipper type, strokes Lana's shoulder.

LANA
I don't know what it was.
I can't explain it.

ALEX
What were you thinking about?

LANA
It wasn't thinking. It was...
feeling. I felt connected.
Like a sense of togetherness.

Everyone is curiously happy for her. Cynthia is imbued with a kind of divine faith.

CYNTHIA (to herself)
Unity.

LANA
It felt good, because I've
been afraid. I've been
afraid, and I haven't been
talking about stuff.

ALEX
What stuff?

It's hard for Lana to come out with it.

LANA
...killing myself...

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

Well, you thought about it,
but you didn't do it. And
there's a big difference
between the two. I'm glad
we're talking about it. We've
talked about it before, but
let's really open up today.
Who has really thought about
it before? Seriously thought
about it?

They sit there silently for a few moments.

Ed shrugs, raising his hand.

ED

I have.

CONNIE

Me too.

MIRIAM

Count me in.

Everyone either nods or raises a hand except Cynthia. The rest of the group looks at her, seemingly waiting for a response. Cynthia looks back at them all.

CYNTHIA

No, I haven't.

ALEX

Well, we're all here now.
That's what's important.

LANA

But what was I feeling?

Alex looks vague. He takes a deep breath.

CYNTHIA

You were receiving the great
spirit. Mankind, all living
creatures, exist as one. We
are not separate entities.
We are born and die as one
continuous spirit. The totality
of being is incredibly vast.
You were touched by the unity
of that spirit.

Alex and all the other members are almost hypnotized by her words. They are rendered silent.

INT. THERAPY ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Everyone is just settling down. Cynthia is talking to Alex.

CYNTHIA

It's an exercise to
transgress the physical
boundaries.

CONNIE

I think we should try it.

ALEX

I was hoping we could spend
some time talking.

CYNTHIA

This will help us to
communicate.

ALEX

I'm not opposed to it, but...

CONNIE

Good!

Connie runs over and grabs Ed's hand. They sit on the floor cross-legged facing each other. Alex helps Cynthia out of her wheelchair onto the floor.

CYNTHIA

We have to get into pairs.

Miriam sits across from Lana. Ralph is with Gilda. Alex stands back.

CYNTHIA

Look into the other's eyes,
but look beyond. The idea is
to bond. Forget about how
our bodies separate us. Be
one.

The pairs fall silent. They are locked into gazes. Connie and Ed giggle momentarily, then fall into profoundly intense stares.

Alex watches with amazement, standing by the door.

THE CAMERA MOVES in and out amongst the pairs, exploring their faces, the depth of the absorption. Each of them seems to have passed onto another plane of existence.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

THE CAMERA MOVES TO REVEAL a mirror on the far wall.

INT. VIEWING ROOM -

On the other side of the mirror, Berrisford is watching with detached interest. An ASSISTANT stands next to him operating a video camera. Alex comes in a side door. He watches the group of pairs as they silently stare at each other. He is intrigued.

INT. THERAPY VIEWING ROOM - LATER

Alex and Berrisford play back the tape.

ON THE TV SCREEN - The group discusses the pairing exercise. We ZOOM and PAN to people as they talk.

CONNIE (on TV)

I was looking at Ed, but then
he became me at one point.
It was like a mirror.

MIRIAM (on TV)

Exactly!

CONNIE (on TV)

And then, at a certain point,
it didn't matter who he was
or who I was. We just were.

LANA (on TV)

I felt...this sounds dumb...

MIRIAM (on TV)

Go on, honey.

LANA (on TV)

Well... it was love.

RALPH (on TV)

No shit, man. I felt it too!

Everyone laughs, not to mock, but with genuine excitement over what they're feeling.

CYNTHIA (on TV)

It is love. Love derived from
the great consciousness.

Alex stops the tape machine, freezing the image on her serene face.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

A week ago they never spoke to each other, and when they did, they argued like children. Incredible. I don't know what the hell she's talking about. Do you?

BERRISFORD

They're pleasant little abstractions. Does it matter?

ALEX

Well, it's completely changed the nature of the group.

BERRISFORD

For the better, I should suggest.

ALEX

How do we know? I understand your decisions are final, but I think we should consider taking her out. I'll set up individual consultation.

BERRISFORD (rising to go)

Dr. Goldman, they are communicating with each other. We deal in communication, do we not?

ALEX

Yes.

BERRISFORD

It's seldom quite as complicated as we think.

Berrisford goes. Alex isn't so sure. He stares at Cynthia's image on the video screen.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

It looks like a gym. Variouslly incapacitated PATIENTS are testing strength on machines or taking whirlpool baths. Cynthia is walking somewhat confidently along a railing. Her therapist, BRUCE, guides her.

BRUCE

How does it feel, okay?

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA

Yeah.

Alex appears in the doorway. He watches her.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Cynthia slowly walks along with Alex holding onto his arm for support.

ALEX

So what about family?

CYNTHIA

The Unity House is my family.

ALEX

I mean blood relatives.

CYNTHIA

None that I know about.

They pass Lana and Miriam who are swallowing medication at a Nurse's Station. Alex smiles at them. Miriam and Lana wave.

ALEX

We've been opening a lot of channels in the group, but, it's funny, you never say what you're feeling or thinking.

CYNTHIA

I feel the spirit within me.

ALEX

Yeah, I know, I know. But I mean you, not what you've been taught to believe. You as a person, as an individual.

CYNTHIA

An individual is just a piece of the whole.

ALEX (stopping)

Listen, I understand that a large part of how you feel about everything was formulated there, but the Unity House is gone. It burned down. No one lived, except you.

Cynthia is taken back by his bluntness.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

I'm not saying this
to upset you, but the
sooner you realize that
that whole phase of your
life is over, and move on,
the better off you're going
to be.

They walk on.

ALEX

I'm sorry. That was
totally unprofessional.

She is upset. She looks like she could cry. She leans away
from him.

They are approaching an elevator that is rather full. The
doors start to close.

ALEX

Hold that please.

They wedge into

INT. ELEVATOR -

Neither of them notice how cramped it is.

ALEX

Two please.

He looks at her briefly. She is turned away from him.

The doors close. Everyone huddles in the compact space
silently, politely. The elevator heaves into movement. It
HUMMS as it whisks down the flights.

The overhead fluorescent light in the car is weak. It flickers
off and on momentarily.

Neither Alex nor Cynthia notice.

The light gets weaker. Finally it just goes out. There is a
general SIGH of annoyance from the passengers.

The light flickers on every few seconds giving off the
effect of a strobe light.

PASSENGER VOICE

You'd think a nice rich
hospital would pay its light
bill.

The passengers CHUCKLE.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

With a few of the passing flickers we see that something has caught Cynthia's eye. Alex is annoyed, but unconcerned with the situation. Cynthia is riveted by the sight of something across the elevator.

A flash goes by. We see Harris. He is staring at Cynthia.

Cynthia moves away to the other side of Alex. She looks over to the far corner again.

Another flash. Harris is gone.

The elevator heaves a bit, then stops. But the doors don't open. Flash. The passengers are pressing buttons, but nothing happens.

PASSENGER
We're stuck.

ANOTHER
Terrific.

Another flash. Alex looks at Cynthia.

ALEX
Are you okay?

CYNTHIA
Yeah.

The emergency BELL starts sounding. Cynthia leans against the back wall while the passengers busy themselves pushing buttons. Cynthia bumps into the man next to her. She looks up at him.

Flash. It is Harris.

Flash. Harris reaches out to Cynthia. She jerks away, slamming into Alex, falling to the floor.

In the darkness we hear her scrambling away.

PASSENGER VOICE
Jesus! What's going on?

CYNTHIA
Let me out!

Flash. Cynthia is on the floor.

Flash. Harris' burnt skeletal face, grinning, coming closer.

HARRIS
We love you, Cynthia. We
miss you.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

He has no eyelids or lips.

Cynthia screams. She slams against the doors.

CYNTHIA

Let me out of here!

She pounds on the doors.

ALEX

Cynthia!

PASSENGER

Grab her!

Suddenly the elevator heaves and the doors open onto:

INT. SECOND FLOOR LOBBY -

Cynthia dives out and scurries away.

CYNTHIA

He's in there.

Alex comes over to her as everyone pours out of the car. She watches the doors.

ALEX

Who?

People stare at her as they come out. The elevator is empty now. Harris isn't inside.

ALEX

Who's in there?

She just stares at the empty elevator.

INT. CYNTHIA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia lies, seemingly asleep, in her bed. It is dark and quiet. Her eyes open. She looks very much awake.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -

Two NURSES are talking quietly. One walks off and the other turns her back.

A DARK FIGURE passes in front.

(CONT.)

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Cynthia lies restlessly in her bed. She hears footsteps coming closer. They stop at her door. She looks over.

There is a shadow moving in the slit underneath. The doorknob turns. Cynthia sits up.

CYNTHIA
Who's there?

She reaches for the button to call the nurse, but she can't find it. The door opens. The dark figure stands there silhouetted.

(CONT.)

FIGURE (whisper)
Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
Who is it?

The figure comes forward. Cynthia backs off the other side of the bed and turns on a light. VICTOR, a handsome, if scruffy, man in an army jacket stands there, somewhat bemused.

VICTOR
Cynthia? It's me. Victor.

Cynthia is amazed.

CYNTHIA
Vic?

VICTOR
Yeah.

CYNTHIA
Holy shit.

She runs to him and hugs him with more strength and passion than we've seen evinced in her. He smiles.

VICTOR
Baby, baby. I've missed you.

CYNTHIA
Oh god. Vic. How can you be here? They said everybody died. They said I was it.

VICTOR
They was wrong.

She looks at him, touches his face. They kiss. Deeply. They've kissed before.

CYNTHIA
Vic. I've missed you.
I can't believe you're alive.

VICTOR
It's a long story.

CYNTHIA
Tell me. Wait. Don't tell me.

She rushes to get some clothes. She starts pulling on jeans.

CYNTHIA
Just get me out of here.

INT. HALLWAY -

Victor peeks out the door. An ORDERLY passes, then disappears. Victor and Cynthia tiptoe out, sprint down the corridor to the exit, and they are gone.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Victor is running along and Cynthia is walking with a certain amount of effort. Victor picks her up and runs, carrying her to Victor's ancient VW van, "Zeke."

CYNTHIA

Zeke! You've still got Zeke!

She hugs Zeke and they hop in.

INT. ZEKE - NIGHT

They cruise along the highway.

CYNTHIA

I'm in this group thing.
They're receptive, but they're
so unexperienced, so bogged
down in their egos.

VICTOR

Adios to that.

CYNTHIA

Exactly. That place is
history.

VICTOR

Where are you gonna stay?

She looks at him, worried for a moment.

CYNTHIA

Well, I thought...

He laughs.

VICTOR

You're damn right you're staying
with me.

She laughs too.

EXT. VICTOR'S APT. - NIGHT

It's a tacky but cozy building, circa 1958. Zeke pulls up.

INT. VICTOR'S APT. -

They come in, turning on lights. It's a dingy couple of rooms, but lush with its variety of objects. Everything looks like it came from the Sixties: handmade furniture, crates holding rows of books, posters, paintings, hanging macrame planters. Cynthia loves the room and everything in it. But she is particularly drawn to a canvas on an easel in the far corner. The painting is of her, sitting serenely in a meadow, the Unity House perched prominently on a hill in the distance. Cynthia looks at it.

VICTOR

I did it by memory.

She is moved. She kisses him sweetly. A CAT jumps on a crate. Cynthia picks it up.

VICTOR

That's Reverend Meow.

Victor strokes the cat and moves to the kitchenette where he pours two shots of Tequilla.

CYNTHIA

You still haven't told me how
you lived. I can't remember anything.

VICTOR

I don't want to talk about
it. I'm here.

He hands her a shot glass. They drink.

VICTOR

You're here.

He takes her gently in his arms, and kisses her tenderly. She seems to melt in his grasp. The cat jumps down. They are oblivious to it. Slowly they sink down onto the floor where they kiss and touch each other with a desire that transcends sexuality. They stop and stare into each other's eyes. He moves his hands over her shoulders, neck, through her hair. She is completely his.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Half a dozen candles illuminate the room. Cynthia and Victor are making love. Not violent, but slow passionate, dreamlike. They are completely enjoying each other. The satisfaction seems spiritual. They stare into each other's eyes the entire time. They are lost.

Gradually, Victor's rhythm builds. As his momentum increases, as the ecstasy nears, Cynthia accelerates too. Heaving, gasping, they are approaching a beautiful climax.

But just when it seems Victor is on the verge, the very threshold, he stops and jumps violently out of bed.

VICTOR

Oh Jesus!

CYNTHIA

What?

Victor paces around the room, practically bouncing off the walls. He is possessed.

VICTOR

Oh my god. I can't believe it.

CYNTHIA

What's the matter? What happened?

VICTOR

Too amazing! Too amazing!

CYNTHIA

What's wrong with you?

VICTOR

Nothing's wrong. Oh man!

He goes to his closet and pulls out a shoe box. He takes out a handgun and checks it to see if it's loaded. He takes out another gun. Cynthia can't believe it.

CYNTHIA

What are you doing?

VICTOR

I just got the most incredible idea. It's absolutely beautiful! Do you want to know what it is?

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA

I guess.

He sits on the bed.

VICTOR

I was just thinking about what we were doing here together...

CYNTHIA

Yeah.

VICTOR

Wouldn't it be incredible if, right at the perfect moment, right when we're shooting the rapids, if we did it?

CYNTHIA

Did what?

VICTOR

What we were meant to do. We were supposed to go with them in the fire. Remember. We wanted to go. Remember? We got left behind. I've been living with that shit for all this time. And there's nothing for me now. There's nothing for you now either. That stupid group? Come on. The people at Unity, that whole time was the best. It will never be that good again. But we're here together now. Don't you get it? Jesus! Cynthia! My god! This is our second chance.

CYNTHIA

I don't know, Vic. I'd like to think about it.

VICTOR

There's nothing to think about. Here. (gives her a gun) You do me and I'll do you when I say go.

He puts the gun to her head and gets on top of her.

CYNTHIA

No, Vic. Please stop. Please! I don't want to do this!

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

VICTOR

You do.

CYNTHIA

No!

He's holding her down. He's getting into it.

VICTOR

Oh Cynthia, it's so beautiful.

CYNTHIA

Please no.

VICTOR

We're on the edge of space
and time.

She's struggling against him but it's no use. He's too
strong. He's coming closer.

VICTOR

Cynthia, it's happening. Put the
gun to my head.

CYNTHIA

Jesus, Vic, no!

VICTOR

Yeah, oh yeah...

CYNTHIA

Stop. Please...

VICTOR

YEAH!!!!

A SHOT sounds.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia bolts up out of bed.

CYNTHIA

No!

The candles are out. Victor isn't in the room. Cynthia slowly
recovers from the dream, catching her breath. She gets out
of bed.

CYNTHIA

Vic?

(CONT.)

She goes out.

CYNTHIA
Vic, where are you?

She goes into

INT. LIVING ROOM -

No Vic. It is dark except for a fire in the fireplace.

CYNTHIA
Vic?

She looks around momentarily. She checks in the kitchen.
Nothing. She peeks back in the bedroom.

The apartment is empty.

She sits on the couch and starts pulling on her jeans and shoes.
The CAMERA moves around her revealing the entire apartment.
We see every angle. It is completely quiet and still. The
CAMERA settles at one angle on Cynthia. A shadow behind her
moves.

VICTOR
Where are you going?

Cynthia jumps from fright.

CYNTHIA
Jesus, Vic. I thought you'd
gone.

CYNTHIA
Me? Leave you all alone?

He pulls her into his arms. She smiles. They kiss.

CYNTHIA
Vic?

He keeps kissing, caressing.

CYNTHIA
Victor?

VICTOR
What?

CYNTHIA
Are you happy?

(CONT.)

VICTOR (kissing)

Very.

CYNTHIA

You want to keep on going,
right?

VICTOR (caressing)

Mmmmm.

They roll back onto the couch. Deep smooching.

VICTOR

Forever.

He touches her soft face. He runs his hands down her neck. They kiss again, she now completely without reservation. Their embrace is so all-encompassing that, when she opens her eyes, it's only then that she realizes that she's kissing a burned and scarred face with only clumps of puffy black muscle hanging onto the bone. Horrified, she dives away onto the floor.

VICTOR

What's the matter?

She looks back up at him. He's normal now. No burnt flesh.

VICTOR

Cynthia?

She knocked over a Tequilla bottle. It's spilled all over the floor. She is speechless. He picks the bottle up.

VICTOR

Why did you pull away like that?

CYNTHIA

I think I better leave.

VICTOR

Why?

She's over by the door. Victor comes and presses against it so she can't get out.

CYNTHIA

Please let go.

VICTOR

I don't understand,

She is silent.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

VICTOR
What did I do?

CYNTHIA
Nothing. I just want to go.

VICTOR
This is ridiculous. We were
having a good time.

She stares at the door. He relents and opens it.

VICTOR
I want you to stay. I care
about you.

CYNTHIA
I know you do.

VICTOR
At least let me drive you.

CYNTHIA
No!

VICTOR
You've changed. It's like
you're not the Cynthia I knew.

CYNTHIA
Maybe I'm not.

She goes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

She walks up to the highway. She looks back.

Victor is in the window waving, firelight dancing behind him.

ETHEREAL SITAR MUSIC UP over the following sequence:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Cynthia has her thumb out as the cars whizz by. One stops.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A sweaty looking DRIVER eyes Cynthia. She just looks off,
depressed and afraid.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAWN

She gets out of the car and goes in the main entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -

She makes her way to her room looking tired, distraught.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

She lies on her bed, exhausted, trying to sleep. She can't.
She gets out of bed.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -

She's looking for an office. She goes in one marked Dr. Goldman.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex is talking with Dr. Berrisford. He comes over to Cynthia in the doorway. She starts explaining things to him. He looks concerned, amazed. They try to step far enough out of the office, but Cynthia can still see Dr. Berrisford watching them, trying to overhear.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DAY

They are travelling along the highway. Cynthia tells Alex at which exit to get off.

EXT. VICTOR'S APT. - DAY

They pull up in front.

INT. APT. HALLWAY -

They knock: no answer.

INT. ENTRANCE TO MANAGER'S APT. -

The MANAGER, a rather fat woman in a moo-moo, waddles away to get the key.

MUSIC FADES OUT

The Manager comes back with the key.

MANAGER
2C, yeah right. There's
nobody in 2C.

(CONT.)

ALEX
Are you sure?

MANAGER
I sure hope I am.

ALEX (to Cynthia)
Are you sure that's the one?

CYNTHIA
Yes. Could we see it?

MANAGER
Are you looking to rent?

CYNTHIA
Yes.

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex, Cynthia and the Manager make their way up the steps.

MANAGER
If somebody's living in there
they got some rent to pay.

They get to the door and the Manager unlocks it.

INT. APT. LIVING ROOM -

The place is completely bare. No furniture. Nothing. Cynthia is amazed.

MANAGER
This is a one bedroom.
Unfurnished. Obviously.

CYNTHIA
How long has it been empty?

MANAGER
As long as I can remember.
At least a coupla years.
But it's a perfectly marvelous
apartment.

Cynthia points into the bedroom.

CYNTHIA
There's a double door closet in
there on the left.

Alex goes in.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

INT. BEDROOM -

Alex looks and sees the closet as she described it.

INT. LIVING ROOM -

He comes back in and nods.

MANAGER

You been in here before?

CYNTHIA

I spilled tequilla there.

She points to a stain on the rug.

MANAGER

I think that's from the ceiling.

There is a large water mark on the ceiling directly above the stain.

MANAGER

But the owner says he's gonna tar the roof next month so don't let that worry you.

Cynthia looks at Alex, hoping that he believes her. The Manager looks at the two of them.

MANAGER

So what do you think?

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DAY

They speed along the highway. Cynthia looks sullen.

CYNTHIA

You don't believe me, do you?

ALEX

We can check with the hall of records. If he's alive we can find him.

CYNTHIA

But I mean about the apartment, about what happened to me last night.

He looks at her.

ALEX

I've done it myself...

CYNTHIA

What?

ALEX

I've woken up and thought
that something happened and
then realized...

CYNTHIA

It wasn't a dream. It was
not a dream.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Cynthia makes her way down the busy passageway. She sees
Gilda in a doorway up ahead. She pauses, but continues on
pretending not to notice her. Gilda is staring directly
at her. Cynthia passes her, but Gilda follows.

GILDA

He's coming after you, isn't
he?

CYNTHIA

Who?

GILDA

He wants you with them, doesn't
he?

Cynthia walks off.

GILDA

You can lie to me, but you
can't lie to him.

INT. THERAPY ROOM - LATER

The entire group is sitting in a loose circle on the floor. Miriam has a pillow in her lap and she crouches over, looking slightly nauseous. Everyone watches her.

MIRIAM

I'm so calm today. I don't know if it will work.

ALEX

Just let it come up. From your toes and fingers.

Miriam closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. Then she shoves her face into the pillow and lets fly a horrendous scream that lasts several seconds. When she's done she sits up with a lightheaded smile.

ALEX

Good!

A few of them clap.

ED

Feels nice, huh?

MIRIAM

Oh, it does.

ALEX

What are you thinking?

MIRIAM

Well... that nothing's so important as to get that tension started, that anxiety I was talking about. I feel loose. I think I'm going to carry a pillow around with me.

Some of the group smile and pat her on the back.

(CONT.)

ALEX
Good. Lana?

Miriam passes the pillow to Lana. Lana passes it to Cynthia.

LANA
I'd rather not.

ALEX
Are you sure?

Lana nods.

CYNTHIA
Me either.

She passes it to Ed.

MIRIAM
Give it a try honey.

CYNTHIA
I just don't feel like it.

ALEX
That's okay. We can try it
another time.

ED
It's up to me then.

He grasps the pillow and bends down, preparing.

Cynthia draws back away from the group sitting back against the back wall. She's bored and slightly irritated with the proceedings.

Cynthia sees Gilda across the room with her usual other-worldly stare. Cynthia closes her eyes and bows her head with angst. She's trying to block everything out.

We are tight on Cynthia's face.

Slowly, very slowly, the light on Cynthia's face dims. It seems to be night.

Cynthia opens her eyes languorously. She sees something horrible, but she seems resigned to it, as if it were a bad dream. She looks around her.

The CAMERA PANS to reveal the

INT. UNITY HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

The scene is exactly like the first time we saw this room with one difference: the hospital group therapy crowd is sitting in and among the Unity House Members. But the Group Therapy Members are oblivious to the change around them. Ed continues to prepare with the pillow. Alex, Miriam, Lana, Ralph and everyone else watch him.

Harris is standing across the room smiling.

We hear faint SITAR MUSIC

Cynthia is speechless. She looks at the mass of people in amazement, but no one takes notice of her, not the Group Therapy crowd or the workshirted and sandaled Unity Members. But Harris sees her. He's watching her with his loving and beautiful grin.

Harris picks up a pail of gasoline, and lovingly pours it into the center of the floor. It splashes up and around in SLOW MOTION

against Miriam's leg

across Lana's cheek

over Alex's shoes

hitting everybody. It seems the whole room is doused by the one pail. But they are all oblivious to it.

Ed continues crouching. Some of the Group Therapy members encourage him, but we can't hear them speak.

Harris smiles at Cynthia.

HARRIS

It's all love, Cynthia

A match is lit.

Cynthia leans forward reaching out.

CYNTHIA

Noooooooo!!!!!!!

It is as blood-curdling and heart-stopping a scream as ever heard. While Cynthia screams there is a flash.

(CONT.)

It is day again in the

INT. THERAPY ROOM -

Cynthia stops. The Unity House Members and Harris are all gone.

The group therapy people all turn to her in amazement.

Cynthia is staring at the match in Miriam's hand lighting her cigarette.

CONNIE

Very good!

RALPH

Jesus Fucking Christ!

MIRIAM

My God, that was the best one yet.

Alex is a little taken, if not scared, by her scream.

MIRIAM

Don't you feel the tension releasing?

Cynthia backs away from them.

CYNTHIA

You don't understand at all.

ALEX

Understand what, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

We did it. We wanted to do it.

CONNIE

What's she talking about?

CYNTHIA

The fire at the Unity House. We set it on purpose with gasoline. We wanted to burn.

They are stunned.

MIRIAM

Oh Jesus.

RALPH

Why? Why would you do that?

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA

Because it was going to be
beautiful on the other
side when we all got there!
All of us together forever!
Never alone again!

Cynthia runs out.

ALEX (going after her)

Cynthia!

The group is silent, shocked.

RALPH

I can't believe it.

ED

Never alone again.

MIRIAM

Shut up!

INT. VIEWING ROOM -

Berrisford has witnessed all this.

INT. HALLWAY -

Cynthia hurries along. Alex is running up behind.

ALEX
Cynthia!

She stops.

ALEX
You shouldn't just run away
like that.

CYNTHIA
What do you want me to do?

ALEX
I want you to come back and
we can talk about it.

CYNTHIA
There's nothing to talk about.
There's nothing to say.

She walks away. He wants to help her, but he doesn't know what to do.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -

Cynthia, in her bathrobe, wanders out of the shower in between the dark, steamy rows of lockers. She passes Lana and Miriam. Miriam is dressing and Lana is putting on a swimsuit.

MIRIAM
Nothing like a hot shower,
huh?

Cynthia doesn't hear or see them. She settles on the far end of the bench. She sits there blankly.

Lana nears, with great trepidation.

LANA
Cynthia?

No response.

LANA
Cynthia? Are you okay?

(CONT.)

Cynthia looks up.

CYNTHIA

What?

LANA

Are you alright?

CYNTHIA

I'm fine.

Cynthia starts to dress, ignoring Lana. Lana stands there for a moment, very awkwardly.

LANA

Well, if there's anything
you ever want to talk about,
I'd like to hear it.

CYNTHIA

What?

LANA

I said, if you ever want to
talk about anything, I'd like
to...I'd like that.

CYNTHIA

I don't have anything to
talk about.

LANA

Well...

CYNTHIA

Could you please leave me
alone?

Lana backs off, on the verge of tears, rushing past Miriam who has observed all this.

MIRIAM

Lana honey, don't...

But Lana is off to the pool. Miriam closes her locker and comes over to Cynthia.

MIRIAM

She's really a good kid.
She looks up to you. She said
she admires your strength.

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA
She does?

MIRIAM
Yeah.

CYNTHIA
Well, sometimes things aren't
what they seem.

MIRIAM
I guess not.

Miriam goes. Cynthia watches her. Beyond the lockers, through a doorway, we see Lana lowering herself into the pool. Blue ripples line the wall beyond.

DISTANT ECHOEY VOICES (offscreen)
Be cleansed!

The sound of the voices unnerves Cynthia. She presses her hands against her forehead in pain.

We are tight on Cynthia. We hear SPLASHING.

ECHOEY VOICE (o.s.)
Cleanse the heart of the mind.

A bright white light melts across Cynthia's face. She looks up.

Beyond the lockers and benches, a mist clears revealing a broad field with a large pond not too far off. Twenty or so PEOPLE are gathered at the edge of the water.

We see the Unity House in the distance.

Cynthia moves away from the lockers and benches off into

EXT. FIELD - DAY

She moves behind a tree to watch, from a safe distance, the small crowd. Harris stands waist-deep in the pond. The Unity House Members all sit or stand on the shore. Harris holds his hands out in a gesture. A GIRL comes forward through the group out into the water. It is Cynthia, a younger Cynthia, with long hair in a braid. She smiles at Harris as she nears him. He clutches her hands.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Cynthia watches 'herself' from behind the tree with complete absorption.

Harris looks into Cynthia's eyes. He touches her face.

HARRIS
Cynthia. You are part of
the whole.

He grabs her by the back of the head and plunges her violently under water.

HARRIS
Cleanse the heart of the mind!

He yanks her up. She smiles exultantly. He dunks her back down.

HARRIS
Cleanse the soul of the self!

He yanks her up again, but it's not Cynthia; it's Lana.
Before she can catch her breath, she's plunged back down.

HARRIS
Cleanse the spirit of the body!

He holds her under. She starts to move her arms around to grab hold of something to pull herself up, but Harris is too strong. She flails around desperately.

The Unity Members watch placidly.

We see her under water, expelling bubbles, frantically trying to re-emerge.

HARRIS
Cleanse the spirit.

Lana's gasping, inhaling water, turning blue.

Harris is possessed.

HARRIS
Cleanse.

Her movements slow. Her eyes close. She is completely still.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

HARRIS

Yes.

Suddenly her eyes dart open. Harris yanks her up.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -

Cynthia gasps for breath. She falls back against the lockers, panting and heaving.

Someone SHOUTS from the pool. We hear splashing. A woman's SCREAM echoes through the locker.

INT. POOL AREA -

A MAN, fully clothed, has just jumped into the pool. He is wading out towards LANA who floats, motionlessly, face down, in the middle of the pool. He pulls her to the edge.

NURSES and DOCTORS rush in. They immediately begin C.P.R., but Lana does not respond.

Cynthia watches.

CYNTHIA

No.

She moves over to the body. Lana has a wide-eyed, exhilarated expression on her face.

Cynthia runs out.

INT. HALLWAY -

Cynthia stumbles through the chaos, still in her bathrobe. A stretcher is rushed past her back towards the pool. Curious onlookers follow into the pool area.

Cynthia is growing gradually more and more frantic. She is walking neither towards nor away from anything. Just moving in a daze. She passes Berrisford without seeing him.

BERRISFORD

Cynthia.

He goes after her.

BERRISFORD

Cynthia?

He takes her arm. She screams loud and long.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP of a needle puncturing skin. A clear fluid is injected.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

TIGHT ON CYNTHIA'S FACE - She talks through a lath of drugged dementia. She is half in shadow.

CYNTHIA
They killed her.

ALEX'S VOICE
You said you fell down in the locker room. Did you pass out?

CYNTHIA
I didn't dream it. I was there. I saw it. They killed her.

ALEX'S VOICE
Who killed her?

CYNTHIA
I'm not supposed to be here. I don't know how it happened. I was so afraid of the fire. I promised to go with them into a unified sphere of being. We made a pledge of Unity. Everyone at the house promised. Now they want me with them... They killed Lana to show me.

Alex and Berrisford sit near her. Cynthia drifts off. Alex turns off the light. They get up and go.

INT. BERRISFORD'S OFFICE -

Alex and Berrisford come in. It is filled with books and files.

ALEX
I don't think she can stay in the group.

Berrisford pulls out some books.

BERRISFORD
I would like you to read some material.

(CONT.)

ALEX

I read this and this. I've
read all of them. In school.
You wrote them.

BERRISFORD

Yes, I know.

ALEX

I understand the collectivity
stuff, but she's beyond
benefitting from the group.

BERRISFORD

Being in a group, it's all she
knows. I studied the Unity House
when it was in full flower.

ALEX

You did?

BERRISFORD

As closely as I could. I abandoned
the research after the fire. There
was no way to get information.
Harris, the leader, he shut
everything out. He controlled
every thought. He convinced them
they were better off dead.

ALEX

She still believes it.

BERRISFORD

Yes, but most importantly, she
has told the group about it.
They have had a shock.
Together they will work it out.
They must work it out together.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Connie and Ed stand at the entrance to the Therapy Room talking quietly. They look unsettled. Miriam walks up. So does Ralph.

CONNIE

There's no session today.

Connie and Ed look very uncomfortable.

CONNIE

Lana died.

RALPH

Little Lana?

ED

They think she killed herself.
It was in the pool here.

MIRIAM

Oh Jesus.

ED

Cythia was there.

MIRIAM

Oh no.

ED

What?

Miriam walks off. The others curiously watch her go.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Miriam is there with Cynthia. Cynthia lies on her bed looking emptily out the window.

MIRIAM

Honey, you cannot blame yourself.

CYNTHIA (turning to her)

She didn't kill herself.

MIRIAM

Well then what happened?

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

45.

Cynthia sits up.

MIRIAM

What do you know?

CYNTHIA

If I tell you, will
you believe me?

MIRIAM

I'll do my damndest.

INT. HALLWAY -

Miriam comes over and closes the door to Cynthia's room.
The door remains closed.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Miriam lights a cigarette and paces nervously. Cynthia watches her.

MIRIAM

You've got to get out of
here. Are you on medication?

Cynthia nods.

CYNTHIA

They think I'm imagining it
all.

MIRIAM

Jesus. We've got to get
you out of here.

CYNTHIA

It doesn't matter where I
go. The Unity House will find
me. Don't you understand?

MIRIAM

Listen honey, I believe that
you believe all this.
Something abnormal is
definitely happening to you.
But keeping you here all
juiced up isn't gonna do
anything. We need to set
you up someplace at the

(CONT.)

MIRIAM (cont.)

beach or in the mountains
where you can fight your
demons in your own way.
Right?

CYNTHIA

But I don't know anyone.
I don't have any money.

MIRIAM

I'll set it up.

CYNTHIA

You will?

Miriam stops pacing.

MIRIAM

I have a confession to make
make. Despite popular
opinion to the contrary,
I have not always been the
career neurotic that I am
today. Up until a couple
years ago I was a writer, a
reporter, a damn good one too,
for your favorite rag and
mine, ME! Magazine. Anyway,
I think I have something of a
plan. I go to the magazine
and get an advance to do this
story. I'm sure they know
about you. They will pay,
through the ass I might add,
for an exclusive on this
kind of thing. Then you tell me
everything: the commune, the
rituals, the suicide pact, the
whole kit'n'kaboodle.

CYNTHIA

I don't know.

MIRIAM

Cynthia, listen to me. This is
a good story; it's a great
story, and it could mean
another chance at a writing
career for me. So there is
a fair amount of self-interest

CYNTHIA (cont.)
here, admittedly. But from
your perspective I don't
see any options. You've
got to tell people what
happened. It's wrong what
they wanted you to do, no
matter what the motives. You
have to tell the world to
what twisted depths people
will go for emotional grati-
fication. They have to know.
Tell them for them, and tell
them for you. It's your life
and you've got to ask yourself
do you want to live or do you
want to die?!

CYNTHIA
I want to live.

MIRIAM
Okay. We're in business.

INT. HALLWAY -

Cynthia walks along with Miriam towards the banks of elevators.

MIRIAM
I think I know a way to
make a phone call. We'll
have you out of here tonight.

CYNTHIA
Alright.

MIRIAM
Uh oh.

Alex is coming down the hallway towards them.

MIRIAM
Mum's the word.

ALEX
Are you going somewhere
Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
No.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Cynthia turns to Miriam.

CYNTHIA

Bye. And... thank you.

MIRIAM

Thank you.

Miriam then gets into the elevator. The doors remain open.

ALEX

How are you feeling?

CYNTHIA

Fine.

ALEX

Good.

He heads off in the opposite direction. Cynthia watches him. She turns back towards Miriam. Miriam is alone in the elevator except for one other person.

Miriam smiles and waves..

Cynthia smiles and waves.

From behind Miriam, Harris, all burned and puffy, smiles and waves.

The elevator doors close.

CYNTHIA

No!

Alex whirls around. Cynthia rushes to the elevator.

CYNTHIA

Miriam! Stop!

She bangs on the buttons. She pounds on the doors. Everyone in the corridor turns to look.

ALEX

Cynthia?

He starts to approach. She runs to a stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL -

Cynthia sprints down a flight. She goes out onto

(CONT.)

INT. HALLWAY, ONE FLIGHT DOWN -

She runs to the elevator and pounds on the button, but the car is already passed.

CYNTHIA (yelling into the door)
Miriam, get out!

She races back to

INT. STAIRWELL -

She flies down the steps. We can hear Alex tailing her.

ALEX (off)
Cynthia!

She swings around a turn into a flight and trips.

She is rolling down

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

She slams into a tree. We see the Unity House in the distance.

VOICE
Cynthia!

ANOTHER VOICE
She's trying to get away!

There are PEOPLE pounding through the brush all around her. She gets up and runs along the path into the forest.

VOICE
Cynthia! We want you to
stay with us! You musn't
be afraid!

She is in total panic, running blindly.

CYNTHIA
Please no.

Branches thrash her face. She can barely see where she is going, but she comes to a halt when she reaches a dark precipice, a cliff which seemingly has no bottom-- just black as night.

The People are getting nearer.

FEMALE VOICE
She's over here.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

We see someone nearing through the brush.

VOICE

We don't want to hurt you.

Cynthia looks down the cliff.

ORDERLY'S VOICE

Take my hand.

Cynthia backs away. She starts lowering herself down, trying to get footing. Some rocks slide out.

INT. STAIRWELL -

ORDERLY

Cynthia, take my hand.

The ORDERLY rushes to her, but she wavers dizzily and falls down the half-flight. She's dazed, but she becomes alert when she sees the Orderly approaching. She picks herself up and runs.

INT. TENTH FLOOR CORRIDOR -

She gets to the elevator. The door is just closing, but it opens again against a purse-- Miriam's purse. The elevator is empty. Cynthia whips around looking for her. ORDERLIES and NURSES are moving towards her.

At the opposite end of the hallway, a window is broken.

Cynthia runs to it. There is a woman's SCREAM from the street below. People YELLING. Cynthia looks out and down.

We know what she sees. She covers her face.

An Orderly takes hold of her. She is docile now, almost weak. Alex runs up. He looks out the window. So does a Nurse.

ALEX

Jesus.

The Nurse crosses herself. Cynthia is escorted away amid the confusion.

The CAMERA is moving forward, towards the window; it seemingly goes out through the window.

The frame is filled with bright blue sky.

Silence, except for a slight BREEZE.

Someone is falling through the sky. It is Miriam.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

We see her closer, flowing down, the wind rushing up around her. She is happy.

MIRIAM
Cynthia, it's really quite
beautiful.

The ground comes rushing up and we slam into it.

Black.

FADE UP -

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

It is raining. Cynthia sits alone in bed, in the dark.

We see Harris sitting across the room in a shadow. Cynthia looks over at him. She turns on the light.

He is gone.

INT. THERAPY ROOM -

Alex, Connie, Ed, Ralph, Gilda are gathered.

ALEX
I talked with the chief
investigator, and he said that,
barring some kind of freak
accident... they were both
self-inflicted.

RALPH
Suicide.

ALEX
Yes.

ED
But Miriam? She was really
getting it together. She
really was. Lana too, sort of.

ALEX
It's difficult for me to
make judgements on it, but
what we can do is explore
our own feelings, our reactions.

CONNIE
Where's Cynthia?

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

Resting.

RALPH

What's wrong with her?

CYNTHIA

There's nothing wrong with me.

Cynthia is in the doorway. The group tenses at her presense.

ALEX

Cynthia, come in.

CYNTHIA (sitting)

Something very serious is happening.

RALPH

What?

CYNTHIA

They want us all now. They want us with them. Whether we like it or not, we're going.

ALEX

Cynthia, we're all upset by what's happened.

CYNTHIA

Harris promised us eternal bliss on the other side when we're all together.

CONNIE (entranced)

Eternal bliss.

CYNTHIA

Miriam was going to write a story about me. They killed her because she was going to help me get out of here.

ALEX

Cynthia, please...

Berrisford watches through the mirror.

CYNTHIA

You're not listening to me!
They want us all to die!
They want you all with them,
and it's because of me!

INT. HALLWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Two ORDERLIES escort Cynthia out of the Therapy Room.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA
Please don't do this. You
don't understand.

Alex follows her.

Ralph, Connie and Ed watch Cynthia go. Gilda passes them
as she leaves.

GILDA
If you have a god, pray to
him for deliverance. Otherwise
you are defenseless.

She walks off.

RALPH
Is everybody fucking losing it
around here?

Connie looks scared. Ed puts his arm around her protectively.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LOBBY -

Berrisford addresses a pack of about thirty REPORTERS and
PHOTOGRAPHERS and CAMERAMEN.

BERRISFORD
Unfortunately what we have
here is a group with a
pre-existing disposition
towards suicidal tendencies.

REPORTER
What about the commune girl?
Has she confirmed that the
fire was a suicide?

BERRISFORD
I have no information on that
for you gentlemen.

At the far end of the lobby Cynthia is being led away by the
Orderlies.

A PHOTOGRAPHER reloading his camera on the outside of the
group spots her.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Hey there she is!

They scramble towards her. Some SECURITY GUARDS and NURSES
lamely try to stop them.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

BERRISFORD

Gentlemen! Gentlemen, please!

TIGHT ON CYNTHIA'S FACE - She is awed by the wolfish press.

REPORTER 2 (off)

Was the Unity House a
suicide cult?

REPORTER 3 (off)

Cynthia, why didn't you die
too?

Flashes streak across her dazed face.

REPORTER 4 (off)

Did you try to escape the fire?

The voices fade. She is guided off, confused.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

She wakes drowsily. There is a figure across the room in the shadows. She turns on the light. It is Alex.

ALEX

I didn't want you to
be alone.

She says nothing.

ALEX

I've got something to show
you. A friend at City Hall
was able to get these.

He opens a folder.

ALEX

Victor Nunez, he was the one
we were looking for?

She nods.

ALEX

Franklin Harris, he was the
leader, right? Well it's
all of them. The death
certificates of all of the
members of the Unity House.
They're all dead.

Some photographs slip out onto the floor. Alex picks them up, but Cynthia sees them. She reaches out for them. He hands them to her reluctantly.

(CONT.)

They are gruesome photographs of various bodies burnt almost beyond recognition. Cynthia has seen these images before.

She hands them back.

CYNTHIA

I know they're dead. But
they're still doing it.
Do you understand?

ALEX

Yeah, I understand. And I
believe that you believe that,
but...

Cynthia turns away in anger.

INT. CONNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Connie is sitting on her bed watching a NURSE tend to a tray. The Nurse gives Connie her prescription. Connie swallows it, but the Nurse lingers, straightening the bed.

Ed comes in. He goes to Connie but stops when he sees the Nurse.

ED

Hi.

CONNIE

Hello.

The Nurse goes. Ed goes into Connie's arms. They hug with deep affection.

ED

I found a place where we
can do it.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex sits on the counter across from Cynthia's bed. He plays with the hinged mirror on the wall.

She sits on her bed staring sullenly.

ALEX

I don't know if you
understand this or not, but
I want to help you.

She says nothing as she watches the reflections in the mirror

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

as he angles it idly. Various perspectives of the room and the view out the door are seen in reflection: a NURSE, a door.

ALEX

You need to let me help you
accept what's happened.

Just then, Connie and Ed come into view in the mirror, out the door, down the hall.

Harris is behind them.

Cynthia darts forward in horror running to the door.

CYNTHIA

Connie! Ed! It's him!

ALEX

Cynthia, stop it!

Alex comes over and grabs her. He looks down the hall.
Connie and Ed have turned the corner.

CYNTHIA

Connie! He's behind you!

ALEX (angry)

Stop this. Stop being your
own enemy! You have got to
grab hold of reality!
Whatever this is, fight it!

Cynthia is confused, powerless. She wants to believe him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Connie and Ed come to a door marked, 'Utility.' Ed looks around cautiously and opens the door, relieved that it's still unlocked.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -

Once inside the small space, he kisses Connie. He pulls out a pint flask of schnapp's from his bathrobe pocket. They both take a swig.

ED

Special occasion.

He leads her back to a door that's labeled, 'DANGER: Authorized Personell Only.' The lock is busted open. They go in.

INT. TURBINE ROOM -

There are metal grating steps leading up to a platform that sits adjacent to a huge spinning turbine, its six-foot blades whirring at top speed. Air ducts lead in and out of the space.

Connie is uplifted, frightened, exhilarated. Their clothes and hair are blown around. They ascend the platform, and sit across from each other. They each take a swig. They kiss softly, spiritually.

ED

I'm so happy.

INT. HALLWAY -

The door to the Utility Room closes. It locks.

INT. TURBINE ROOM -

Connie and Ed stare into each other's eyes. They are lost.

The CAMERA MOVES IN AND OUT between and around them, exploring the depth of their absorption. The CAMERA moves towards the huge spinning turbine. Its sound builds to a tremendous ROAR.

We see Connie and Ed through the door into the Turbine Room. The door is pulled closed by someone or something. The knob locks.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Alex and Cynthia.

ALEX

Miriam and Lana were both
deeply disturbed women.
Miriam tried to kill herself
before. Here in the hospital.
Lana was talking about it.
You heard her. You can't
twist what they did into
something other than what
it was.

Just then, all the lights go out.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Alex goes to the door.

CYNTHIA

Wait.

She comes with him.

INT. HALLWAY -

Darkness and confusion.

ALEX

Why is it so difficult
to keep the damn lights
on around here?!

Other PATIENTS come out and wonder. Flashlights. A NURSE streams by.

NURSE

It's just overloaded
circuits. Everyone please
go back into your room.

A series of emergency lights go on, their white cones of illumination punctuating the black.

AT THE NURSE'S STATION - An elderly, skeletal custodian, EDGAR, is on the phone.

EDGAR

The turbine room on two?
Alright. (he hangs up)
We'll set it straight in
a minute. Somethin's
caught in the turbine.

NURSE

Hurry.

INT. HALLWAY -

Edgar comes up to the utility door, but it won't budge.

EDGAR

Goddammit.

He walks off.

INT. UTILITY TUNNEL -

This is a low passageway between floors. Edgar has to stoop under the ducts and pipes. He comes to a small hatchway in the ceiling above him marked, 'CAUTION: Turbine.'

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

There is a latch which has to be pulled to release the hatchway. Edgar pulls. It's stuck. He yanks with his frail body. The latch barely moves.

A trickle of blood streams out at the edge, but Edgar doesn't see it.

Edgar yanks and pulls with all his might, groaning and heaving. Finally he stops in frustration. He sits on a duct, resting.

Just then the latch undoes itself; the hatchway slams open. Edgar is showered with red lumpy fluid. He is coated with it.

EDGAR
What the hell?

Edgar looks down.

In the pool of red is a woman's shoe.

And part of a hand.

He looks up to the whirring turbine. His face is spattered with tiny red droplets.

Edgar starts shaking.

EDGAR
It's blood... Ah.....
It's blood!

The old man coated with blood wanders off screaming dizzily.

INT. HALLWAY -

Another NURSE passes Alex and Cynthia as they wait in the dark.

NURSE
It's a simple mechanical
problem. Please just go
back into your rooms.

Cynthia is leaning against the wall agitatedly. Alex is next to her. He momentarily walks away to help an OLD WOMAN.

His dark shape leans back in next to her. He holds fourth a match.

HIS VOICE (whispering)
Connie and Ed are with us
now.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA
Connie and Ed?

The match suddenly lights itself. She looks at the match curiously and then at his face; it is Harris' face, all burned, mere charred flesh hanging onto the bone.

HARRIS
We need you Cynthia.

Cynthia backs away. She runs through the dark.

CYNTHIA
Where are they?

She is frantic.

CYNTHIA
Where are Connie and Ed?
Where are they?

Alex hears Cynthia screaming. He runs down the hall to stop her. She is only getting more and more hysterical. She is upsetting all the PATIENTS in the hall.

CYNTHIA
Where are Connie and Ed?

The lights come back on. Alex corners her.

CYNTHIA
Where are they?!?!?

INT. THERAPY ROOM - NIGHT

Alex, Gilda, Ralph.

RALPH
What the fuck is going on?

ALEX
I think it's safe to say
that the forward thrust of the
group has been largely
hampered...

RALPH
Yeah, I think that's safe
to say considering everybody's
dead. What the hell happened
to Connie and Ed?

ALEX
There was evidence that they
were drinking at the time.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

RALPH

Ed drank before. A lot of times. But he didn't usually decide to jump into a Mixmaster, man!

ALEX

Ralph, as for your own safety, you are being given the most amount of protection possible.

GILDA

The police are powerless.

RALPH

Jesus H. Christ. I'm getting the hell out of here.

Ralph storms out.

INT. HALLWAY -

As Ralph leaves the room, a paunchy POLICEMAN escorts him off.

RALPH

You a good shot?

POLICEMAN

I'm okay.

RALPH

Great. We're all gonna die!!!

The various PATIENTS and NURSES in the hall take note.

WE CUT TO:

61.

Berrisford's silent image on a video screen.

INT. CYNTHIA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The newscast continues silently on the TV in her room. She is getting dressed. She peeks out the door.

INT. HALLWAY -

The POLICEMAN assigned to her is down the hall a ways, chatting with a NURSE. Cynthia slips out and down the corridor.

She waits for an elevator. When a door opens, she tries to inconspicuously slip inside but she finds herself face to face with Alex who is just getting out of the elevator. He holds a grocery bag.

ALEX

Isn't this a coincidence?

CYNTHIA

I have to get out of here.

He takes her arm and starts leading her back to her room.

ALEX

Believe it or not, this is the safest place for you to be. The police are here. There are doctors here. And I'm going to stay here. All night. I even brought provisions.

The Policeman comes out of Cynthia's room, looking for her alarmedly. He's instantly relieved to see her there with Alex. Alex directs her inside. She goes. Alex gives the Policeman a look.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Alex takes the stuff out of the bag: chips, dips, cookies, six-pacs of beer. He offers some of the chips. She shakes her head. The TV's still on. Alex switches it around with the sound off.

CYNTHIA

Connie and Ed aren't going to be the last.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

Yes they are. Everyone's
under protection. Nothing
can happen.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - A knife pointing upwards. An outstretched hand slams
itself down, the blade impaling through the palm. The hand
squirms its fingers a bit, then pulls off.

INT. RALPH'S ROOM - NIGHT

He gets up clenching the perforated hand. He is very calm. He
closes the knife and puts it in a drawer.

Suddenly, violently, he kicks a trash bin. Then he is calm
again.

Ralph's assigned POLICEMAN pokes his head in the door.

RALPH'S POLICEMAN

Everything okay?

Ralph sticks his hand behind him. He is very friendly, very
normal. He smiles.

RALPH

Yes, thank you officer.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ralph walks along. Ralph's Policeman is beside him. His hand
bleeds, but goes unnoticed.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex lies back in front of the TV, eyes closed, a beer can
rested on his stomach. Cynthia watches TV. The door opens and
Ralph comes in.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Ralph's Policeman looks in and, seeming satisfied, waits outside.

CYNTHIA
Ralph? What is it?

RALPH
Nothing. I just came to see how you're doing.

She shrugs.

RALPH
Everything's gonna be okay.

CYNTHIA
What's going to be okay?

He goes into the bathroom and rinses his blood-soaked hand. Cynthia sees this.

CYNTHIA
What happened to your hand?

RALPH
Don't worry. Everything's gonna be okay.

CYNTHIA
Ralph?

Cynthia is mystified. He goes.

INT. HALLWAY -

Ralph walks off, his Policeman following.

CYNTHIA (yelling down the hall)
Ralph? Ralph?

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

She comes in and pokes Alex awake.

CYNTHIA
Ralph was just here. His hand was all bloody.

ALEX
Why?

CYNTHIA
I don't know!

(CONT.)

They go to the door and they are immediately faced with a NURSE.

NURSE

Pesco.

ALEX

What?

NURSE

This is for R. Pesco. Is he here?

She holds up a paper cup with a tablets in it.

NURSE

He didn't take his four o'clock. If he misses this one, I'm gonna...

ALEX

What is that?

NURSE

Who are you?

ALEX

I am his doctor. I am one of his doctors.

He fumbles for a badge. She sees it.

NURSE

Lithium, 40 mg.

Alex grabs the cup.

ALEX

If he doesn't take this he'll completely flip out.

NURSE

Hey!

Alex and Cynthia run down the hall. Cynthia's Policeman follows.

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex and Cynthia and the Policeman scan for Ralph.

CYNTHIA

Look.

ANGLE - On the floor, every five or six feet along in a line, there is a moderately sized droplet splatter of blood.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

They follow the droplets along the hallway.

They follow the droplets through a set of double doors.

INT. DARK, QUIET HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ralph walks along, his Policeman trailing. No one else is around.

RALPH'S POLICEMAN
Are you sure you know where
you're going?

Ralph stops suddenly and turns to him. Ralph smiles warmly.
Suddenly he hits the cop in the head using two fists.

The cop falls.

INT. HALLWAY IN CLOSED SECTION OF HOSPITAL -

Alex and Cynthia's Policeman move down the hall, following the drops, scanning in doorways. Cynthia is just behind them.

These hallways are unused; nobody around.

ALEX
Was he behaving strangely?

CYNTHIA
He was acting like himself.

CYNTHIA'S POLICEMAN (with walky-talky)
I can't get him. He must be
shut off.

They pass an open freight elevator. Cynthia looks in it and stops.

There is a droplet of blood on the floor inside.

CYNTHIA
Hey.

A bloody hand reaches out of the elevator covering her mouth
and pulls her inside.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR -

Ralph holds her, slams the gate closed, and flips the switch.
The car moves down.

Cynthia screams.

(CONT.)

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex and the Policeman rush up just as the car disappears.

ALEX
Cynthia!!

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR -

They descend. She wipes blood from her face. He looks wired.

CYNTHIA
Ralph we have to go and get
your medication.

She slowly moves to the control panel. He watches her. Just as she is about to reach the buttons, he violently pushes her back.

RALPH
Relax.

He smiles.

INT. BASEMENT -

The elevator comes down to a stop. Ralph throws the door open. It is a huge dark space, a vast store room. Cynthia won't come out.

Ralph gestures politely.

CYNTHIA
Ralph, I'm not going out.
We have to go back upstairs.

Ralph grabs her firmly and pulls her out.

CYNTHIA
Ralph, please!

RALPH
I have to talk to you.

He leans in the elevator, opens the control panel and yanks some wires. Sparks fly. The HUMM of the elevator motor dies. Cynthia is panicked.

RALPH
It's very, very, very, very,
very important that I talk
to you.

CYNTHIA
Ralph, you're not being
yourself. Can't you tell?
It's not you.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

RALPH

No! This is the real me!

He flies across the basement and, grabbing a chair, smashes the control box for the electric cargo door, the only other entrance.

He darts up a storage aisle. He rips a phone off the wall.

RALPH

I come down here a lot.
It helps me unwind.

Cynthia can't see him. He wildly paces up and down the storage aisles. Cynthia starts to cry.

CYNTHIA

Ralph, please! How do we
get out?

RALPH

It's been said by better
men than me in better
ways in better times:
there is no way out!!!

She goes to a barred window.

CYNTHIA

Help!

Ralph goes into a rage. He pushes over a huge storage shelf. Everything spills and breaks. Amid the rubble a pile of surgical blades lies glinting in a pool of light.

Ralph looks down at it.

Cynthia sees him looking at it. She is afraid.

He grabs some of the blades randomly and disappears. He is walking crazily up and down the storage aisles. Cynthia only catches glimpses of him. He jumps up and breaks the single-bulb lights that hang on wires. The space grows dark. Only a single bulb remains. All the while, Ralph talks and talks.

RALPH

There are only a few
chances for real glory, and
most people fuck it up.
Most people can't even find
the noses on their fucking
faces. You want an example?
How about every fucking
doctor and every fucking
patient in this entire hospital!

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

RALPH (cont.)

Do you think I'm just going to let myself slowly dissolve into nothingness here!?! I'm talking about a glorious glory.

CYNTHIA

Ralph, please, they said you have to take some pills.

RALPH

Pills have got nothing to do with it! You know what I'm talking about!

She can't see him.

CYNTHIA

No, I don't.

RALPH

You do! Real glory, hallelujah! The great big gig in the sky. Don't play dumb, Cynthia.

She sees him at the far end of the aisle. His shirt is off. There are deep, bleeding cuts all over his chest and stomach. He has blades clenched in both fists.

Cynthia is terrified.

RALPH

I think you know the word I'm searching for.

He starts making deep slashes on his arm.

RALPH

U, N, I, T, Y! Unity!

Cynthia is utterly, completely, totally horrified.

CYNTHIA

Oh god, Ralph! No!

He runs off behind a shell.

RALPH

Yes, oh, yes! Eternal bliss!

WITH HIM - as he moves down the aisle, he is cutting his other arm, his stomach, face, neck, all without flinching in the least.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

He pushes over shelves angrily.

CYNTHIA

Ralph, please, stop!

He swats at the one remaining lamp. It flickers on and off. Ralph's eyes flutter. He falls. Cynthia rushes to him.

CYNTHIA

Ralph!

He throws a scalpel at her. It misses, but she is spattered with blood.

RALPH (fading)

Get back.

Cynthia is crouched down, crying as she watches him.

RALPH

Join us, Cynthia.

The light flickers off, then on. A hand is on Cynthia's shoulder. She looks up...

It is Harris.

HARRIS

Join us.

The bulb dies. Blackness.

VOICES (echoey)

Join us.

INT. RALPH'S ROOM -

Alex and the Policeman come in. No one there. They go.

INT. GILDA'S ROOM -

They bust in. Gilda darts awake. Another POLICEMAN sits there.

GILDA

What is it?

INT. CORRIDOR -

Alex nears a nurse's station where another POLICEMAN is on the phone.

POLICEMAN

They're in the basement.
The girl's alive.

Alex rushes off.

INT. CORRIDOR BASEMENT -

Lots of COPS, a few DOCTORS and ORDERLIES. Alex is stopped by a FEMALE COP.

He looks into the basement area and sees Ralph face down some bloody cuts visible. A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER is taking pictures of him.

Berrisford goes to Cynthia. She is huddled in a blanket. Berrisford talks to the NURSE with her while giving Cynthia an injection.

The squat DETECTIVE WASSERMAN comes over to Alex.

WASSERMAN

You're running out of
patients, Dr. Goldman.

They cover Ralph.

WASSERMAN

But then so am I.

ALEX

What did she say happened?

WASSERMAN

She's having a little
trouble with reality
right now.

Cynthia is being escorted out by the Nurse. She stops in front of Alex.

CYNTHIA

Goodbye.

She is led off.

CYNTHIA (back to him)

I'm going too now.

Alex suddenly realizes what she means.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

Cynthia.

She doesn't respond.

ALEX

I've got to go with her.

WASSERMAN (firm)

You can stay here. Now
tell me about this Ralph
Pesco.

ALEX

He was a schizoid manic
depressive with suicidal
tendancies.

Berrisford nears.

ALEX

Where is she being taken?

BERRISFORD

Isolation.

ALEX

What?!

BERRISFORD

Do you know what the
alternative is? Custody.
She's been materially involved
with every one of these
deaths. I had to bargain with
them just to keep her here.
And as for what's best for her,
you're in no position to be
advising me. What were you
doing with alcohol in a patient's
room? Why didn't you notify
security immediately when Pesco
was missing? She's not your
patient anymore.

ALEX

What?!

BERRISFORD

She's in the throes of a
complete delirium. She's not
thinking for herself. As far as
she's concerned she never left
the Unity House. She's operating

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

BERRISFORD (cont.)
under the laws of group
behavior and she's willing to
lose her life in order to prove
her allegiance to this group
code! She's a danger to herself
and others.

ALEX
But that's just a theory.

BERRISFORD
It's not a theory if it can
be proven.

ALEX
But you're practicing with an
unproven theory.

BERRISFORD
She is ill. Do you have any
other suggestions?

Alex is silent.

BERRISFORD
I'll have your office things
sent to you. I'll be happy
to provide a letter of
recommendation. I'm sorry.

Alex is beyond words. Berrisford and Wasserman walk off.

WASSERMAN (back to Alex)
We'll talk later.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cynthia is escorted through the hospital by the Nurse and
Policeman. She moves without resistance, without emotion.
We hear CRICKETS. Cynthia hovers in a dreamlike calm. The
hospital is a blur as they move through it.

Objects pass in front of our view as we TRACK with her.

Something blurs past us, and, as it glides away, we find
Cynthia, the Nurse, and the Policeman walking up the path
to

EXT. UNITY HOUSE - DUSK

The imposing facade of the old Victorian with it's warmly
lit windows looks inviting. The three make their way over

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

the lawn up the path towards the front porch. An evening BREEZE is just coming up.

Cynthia looks around, absorbing the environment. The Policeman and the Nurse say nothing. They reach the front door. The Nurse opens it with a key. Cynthia turns to them.

CYNTHIA

Would you like to come in?

NURSE

No thank you.

Cynthia steps inside.

INT. ISOLATION ROOM -

The door is closed. It is dark. A video camera hovers above. We hear keys LOCKING a bolt. Cynthia stands there.

VOICE

It's time, Cynthia.

INT. CORRIDOR -

The Nurse puts her keys in her pocket, looks at the Policeman, and goes.

The Policeman stays.

INT. NURSE'S STATION -

Alex approaches the HEAD NURSE and asks her something. She nods and points to the Policeman who sits guard in front of Cynthia's room. Alex goes over to the Policeman.

Just then, the Head Nurse takes a call.

HEAD NURSE (talking on phone)

...yes, he's here.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Two ORDERLIES have Alex arm in arm. PEOPLE in the lobby stop and stare. Berrisford is there.

BERRISFORD

I'm sorry, Dr. Goldman.

ALEX

No, you're not. But you will be.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

Alex angrily shakes off the guards. He tries to leave with a semblance of dignity. Just when he reaches the door he grabs a lobby chair and throws it through the plate glass front windows causing a tremendous smash. The Orderlies go after him, but Berrisford stops them.

ORDERLY

He's fuckin' crazy.

Alex walks off.

CUT TO:

A dim, fuzzy VIDEO IMAGE of Cynthia lying in her bed. We are looking at her from directly above.

INT. NURSE'S STATION -

Cynthia is monitored, like several other patients, on a small screen. We can see that she is talking.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

TIGHT ON CYNTHIA

The only illumination comes from a small lamp near Cynthia's bed. She seems comparatively alert.

HARRIS' VOICE

You were always the best
and brightest and the
prettiest. We love you.
Come with us.

ANOTHER VOICE

What's stopping you?

We see the whole room. It's filled with Unity House Members, all of them. They're sitting, leaning, slumping everywhere in the shadows.

FEMALE UNITY MEMBER

We all just want to be
together. That's all we've
ever wanted, isn't it?

CYNTHIA

Why are you doing it to
everybody else? Why don't
you kill me?

They make no response. Cynthia sits up.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA
Why don't you kill me?

INT. NURSE'S STATION -

A NURSE notices Cynthia's movement on the screen. She turns the volume up.

CYNTHIA (on TV)
Why don't you just kill me!?!?

The Nurse gets up.

Gilda is standing there. She saw Cynthia scream on the TV. She follows the Nurse. Gilda's Policeman lurks nearby.

GILDA'S POLICEMAN
Hey.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

Harris' hand caresses Cynthia's face.

HARRIS
You have to want to join us
because you love us. You've
got to do it for yourself.

We hear the Nurse UNLOCKING the door.

CYNTHIA
But I'm so scared.

The hand pulls away into a shadow.

FROM BEHIND THE NURSE -

She opens the door. The room is empty except for Cynthia.

NURSE
You want me to call the
doctor, honey?

Cynthia says nothing.

NURSE
Try to sleep, alright?

Gilda rushes in behind the Nurse, going to Cynthia.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

NURSE

Hey get out of here!

GILDA (frantic)

I can do nothing for you
now, but know this: the
answer you seek is inside
of you! It is inside you!

Gilda's Policeman comes in.

NURSE

Get her out of here!

He pulls at Gilda.

GILDA (as she goes)

Know yourself and you will
be at peace! It is so!

The Nurse slams the door closed. Cynthia is alone.

INT. HALLWAY -

Gilda's Policeman is on the phone.

POLICEMAN

Yeah, I'm taking her back to
her room...

He looks around. Gilda is gone.

POLICEMAN (hanging up)

...yeah, bye.

He starts looking for her.

INT. HALLWAY ELSEWHERE -

We are following Gilda through the corridors back to her
room.

She turns around and looks, but she just keeps going. She
stops at a water fountain, and takes a drink.

She continues on.

INT. GILDA'S ROOM -

She comes in and lays down.

Momentary silence.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

A shaft of light hits Gilda as someone comes in the door. Whoever it is nears Gilda. She is calm. She looks over.

GILDA
I knew you'd come.

Silence.

GILDA
But you're too late.

She holds up a bottle of tablets. We fleetingly see the word 'poisonous.'

The bottle smashes to the floor.

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Big place for a bachelor, but sparsely furnished. Alex lies in bed drinking scotch from an almost empty glass. He grabs a scrap of paper with a number. He dials. It rings several times.

BERRISFORD (groggy, over telephone)
Hello.

ALEX
This whole case has to be given over to the review board.

INT. BERRISFORD'S BEDROOM -

He turns on a light and sits up. It is a large, under-decorated space. He is alone. (The following is intercut.)

BERRISFORD
I'm afraid you'll do yourself more damage than me.

ALEX
It's a conflict of interest. The only way you can study her properly is to endanger her well-being. It's experimentation.

BERRISFORD
It's not experimentation, Dr. Goldman. This is very possibly a major breakthrough. If I can prove it, if I can prove that the group is more important to her

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

BERRISFORD (cont.)
than her own life, that means
a major discovery in the
understanding of group
psychosis. Don't interfere
with something you don't
understand.

ALEX
I understand it. I understand
it beautifully! You want to
prove a theory, a fucking theory!
If she kills herself you've got
your proof! You can write a book
and get famous and go on Phil
Donahue....!

BERRISFORD
Goodnight, Dr. Goldman.

Berrisford hangs up.

Alex is explosive.

INT. HOSPITAL MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Alex comes in keeping a wary eye out for those who might recognize him.

He takes the stairs.

INT. NURSE'S STATION, ISOLATION - NIGHT

Alex skulks around up to the desk. He positions himself so that he can see the video screen with Cynthia. HETTIE, a middle-aged nurse, nears.

Alex looks up nervously wondering if she knows he is persona non grata.

HETTIE

Burning the midnight oil,
Goldman?

He smiles anxiously.

ALEX

Yeah. How you doing, Hettie?

We move in on the video screen. Cynthia is awake. She is talking.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

TIGHT ON HER -

She looks like she's been crying. She stares off into space.

CYNTHIA

None of it matters unless
I can share it with you. I've
realized that you really love
me. You wouldn't be doing
this if you didn't.

VOICE

That's right. You need our love.
We need your love.

Someone crosses in the shadows to the window.

The rubber edging is slit with a scalpel.

CYNTHIA

It feels good. I know this
is right.

A shadowed hand pushes on the plexiglass.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

79.

The windowpane plops onto the pavement below.

A breeze whafts in.

Cynthia gets out of bed and comes to the window. She looks out onto the evening horizon, refreshed, fully experiencing the moment.

CYNTHIA

I know this is right.
We'll all be together.

INT. NURSE'S STATION -

Alex is watching the TV screen. But Cynthia is not in frame.

HETTIE

Don't worry. She's been
bouncing around in there
all night.

Alex is irritated by the sight of the empty bed. He looks over at Hettie putting prescription tablets in paper cups on a tray.

CLOSE UP - She drops pills in each cup.

Alex thinks of something.

HETTIE

I'm off to my rounds.

ALEX

Enjoy.

As soon as she's gone, Alex leans over to the computer terminal. He looks around cautiously and types in something.

C.U. OF SCREEN - It reads, 'PRESCRIPTION DATA, PESCO, RALPH.'
Soon an answer arrives reading, 'CLASSIFIED REFERRAL, DR.
BERRISFORD.'

Alex is curious.

He types in, 'PRESCRIPTION DATA, DAVIDSON, CONNIE,' but the same answer comes back.

He types in the entries for 'LAMONT, ED,' and 'HESSE, MIRIAM,' and 'YOSHIMURA, LANA,' but they all come back with, 'CLASSIFIED REFERRAL, DR. BERRISFORD.'

Finally he types in, 'PRESCRIPTION DATA, BECKER, CYNTHIA.'
The same answer comes back.

Alex is totally perplexed.

(CONT.)

Then he thinks of something else.

He reaches into his pocket. He extracts the crumpled paper cup with Ralph's prescription which he grabbed from the Nurse earlier. He looks at the tablet. It appears to be respectable enough.

He gets up and goes to the alcove behind the Nurse's Station. He's keeping a cautious calm.

He puts the tablet on the counter. He takes a blade from a drawer and cuts the tablet in half. He presses his finger against the powder inside. He tastes it.

Suddenly Alex is very alarmed.

He comes out of the alcove, looking around. Down the hall Hettie is talking to another NURSE. The Nurse is shaking her head, looking concerned. Just then they both look at Alex. The Nurse heads up the hall towards two SECURITY GUARDS. Hettie starts backing away from Alex. She looks frightened of him.

ALEX
Hettie, please.

Hettie moves away quickly to a phone.

Alex doesn't know what to do.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

She is at the window, facing out.

VOICE
Now.

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex rushes over to Cynthia's door and pounds furiously.

ALEX
Cynthia! Cynthia!

The Nurse is marching back with the two Security Guards. Alex pounds louder in frustration.

The two Security Guards start running. One of them has his gun drawn. Alex wants to run, but he sees there is no way out. He sticks his hands in the air. The guards are upon him. They start leading him away.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

HETTIE

Get some rest, Goldman.

He looks back at Hettie. He sees a fire alarm.

Suddenly, he grabs one of the Guard's guns. He dives against the wall and pulls the fire alarm.

All of the Isolation Ward doors open. BELLS and SIRENS go off. Red lights flash on and off.

HETTIE

Oh no!

Alex runs from the Guards shooting but missing. He runs up the hall in the opposite direction of Cynthia's room. He hides in a doorway. They pass. He heads back up to Cynthia's room. He grabs the cop's chair and runs into

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM -

He slams the door and rams the metal chair leg into the bolt latch to secure the door. SIRENS and BELLS continue. Alex looks over. The room is dark except for the red light flashing on and off. Cynthia is crouched in the far corner by the open window.

We can see that the room is otherwise empty of anybody.

CYNTHIA

Get out of here. I want to do it!

ALEX (going to her)

No. Cynthia, please. I'm not going to be able to come back but you have to understand something. Please! Are you listening to me?!?! Berrisford's been doing something with the medication for everybody in the group. Those lithium pills of Ralph's were placebos. Sugar! Ralph wasn't getting the right medication! That's why he freaked out. Berrisford did it, and he's going to be treating you and he has this fucked up theory about how you still think you're part of the Unity House, and the only way he can prove it is if you want to kill yourself!

Behind Alex, the dark shape of Berrisford emerges from outside the window. It is climbing inside from the ledge.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX (cont.)

Do you hear me?! He's going
to want you to kill yourself!
He's recreating the whole
thing for you! But you can't
listen to him!

Cynthia is getting hysterical. Berrisford stands behind
Alex with a scalpel.

BERRISFORD

Dr. Goldman.

Alex turns around.

Berrisford bashes him in the head, neatly slicing off some
skin. Alex flies against the wall.

The gun is knocked away.

Alex writhes a little then dips into unconsciousness.

Cynthia is a basket case. She looks at Alex.

CYNTHIA

No, no, no, no!

Berrisford comes to her and starts giving her an injection.
She calms herself. She looks at him dreamily.

CYNTHIA'S P.O.V. -

She sees Harris gazing at her lovingly.

HARRIS

Only one thing matters.

She touches his face.

CYNTHIA

Our love. We'll be together.
All of us.

Berrisford takes Alex's gun.

INT. CYNTHIA'S ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex comes to. The ALARMS and BELLS are still ringing. Cynthia and Berrisford are gone.

ALEX

Shit!

INT. HALLWAY -

The corridors are run amok with ISOLATION PATIENTS (the worst kind) all escaped from their rooms. Alex runs out of Cynthia's room. Hettie is by the stairway helping Isolation Patients exit.

HETTIE

One at a time! Please do not use the elevator! No pushing!

Alex is frantically looking for Cynthia and Berrisford checking everywhere, pushing open doors.

Security Guards are at the far end of the hallway. Alex goes to Hettie.

ALEX

Where's Berrisford?

HETTIE

Goldman, this is your fault!

ALEX (furious)

Where is he? He's going to kill Cynthia! Tell me where he is!

HETTIE

I haven't seen him!

The Guards see Alex. They come after him. He runs.

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex scans every room. He slams into PATIENTS. The Guards aren't far behind. Alex turns a corner, passing a door marked, 'NOT AN EXIT: ROOF ACCESS.' It is ajar. He goes in without the Guards seeing him.

INT. STAIRWAY -

It is dark, but the red lights flash. He runs up several flights. The landings face onto the outside with a railing, open, no glass.

He turns a corner. Cynthia is there.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

She is perched on the outside of the railing, a serene expression on her face, the wind blowing her frail white gown.

Alex freezes. He moves towards her slowly, hands outstretched.

ALEX (soothingly)
Cynthia, take my hand...
Just relax... Think about
what you're doing... Stay
calm... I want you to take my
hand...

She watches him blankly. She turns to someone behind Alex.

CYNTHIA
It's so beautiful.

Alex turns. There on the stair above is Berrisford, his face dancing in the flashing red light.

ALEX (to Berrisford)
You piece of shit!

Cynthia lets go.

Alex reaches out.

ALEX
No!

FALLING -

It is a dizzying spiral. We hear the wind rushing up as we go faster and faster down. We slam into the ground.

Cynthia's head hits rock.

TIGHT ON HER FACE - She is still. Blood drips out her nose and mouth. She is dead.

We hold on her until gradually bright light pours in over her.

THE CAMERA LIFTS UP revealing

EXT. UNITY HOUSE - DAY

Cynthia rises and walks towards the house through a field in the foreground.

INT. UNITY HOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY

She opens the door. Everything is clean and fresh. Flowers. Light. Birds CHIRPING.

Harris is at the far end of the hall. There is an intense white light behind him. He is smiling beautifully. Cynthia goes towards him. As she nears him, she reaches out her hands. He does too. They clasp.

ALEX'S VOICE

Cynthia!

Suddenly she falls.

She drops and dangles in the night air against

EXT. HOSPITAL BUILDING - NIGHT

She is unconscious. She swings twelve stories above the pavement.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS UP her arm to her hand grasped tightly by Alex's hand. We continue up to Alex.

ALEX

Cynthia! Open your eyes!
Open your eyes!!!

He is over the railing holding on with his other hand.

Cynthia is coming to.

ALEX

Pull up! Pull yourself up
so I can get a grip on you!

CYNTHIA

Let me go.

ALEX

No!

CYNTHIA

Let me go. I saw it.
It's beautiful.

ALEX

You didn't see shit! Hold on!

BERRISFORD

Eternal bliss.

CYNTHIA

Yes! I want to go! Let me go!

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

BERRISFORD (coming forward)
Let her go. She needs it.

ALEX
No! Cynthia, Harris doesn't
exist! He's dead! Look at who
that is! Look at him! Looook!

Cynthia looks at Berrisford deleriously.

He changes from Berrisford to Harris with each flash. He comes to the railing where Alex is holding on. He politely tries to undo Alex's grip, but Alex holds on.

ALEX
Goddam you! Goddam you!

Alex's grip on Cynthia slips down to her fingers.

BERRISFORD
Let her go. Let her go and
I'll let you live. I'll give
you co-authorship in my
writings on group behavior.

ALEX
Fuck you!

Berrisford kicks Alex's hand. Alex screams.

ALEX
Did you hear that? He's trying
to bribe me to let you die!
But I'm not letting go!

Berrisford shoots at Alex, but Alex yanks himself out of the way. Berrisford misses. Berrisford aims the gun at Alex's hand.

ALEX
Cynthia, pull up!!!

BERRISFORD
You'll be with them, Dr. Goldman.
Be happy.

ALEX
No!!!

He shoots. One of Alex's fingers is ripped apart. His grip slides down the railing. Alex's screams are excruciating.

Berrisford starts pounding on Alex's mutilated hand. Cynthia is watching him do this.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ALEX

Cynthia, don't let him kill
you! Don't let him do this!

She looks at Berrisford viciously pounding on Alex's hand.

CYNTHIA

Let me up. Stop it.

She starts to climb up but she can't.

CYNTHIA

Let me up!

BERRISFORD

I'm afraid it's too late
for that.

Alex's grip on her slips down to two fingers. They CRACK.
She yells from the pain. She swings in the breeze.

Alex is weakening. He is losing consciousness. He knows
he is about to die.

GUARD

Dr. Berrisford?

Suddenly Berrisford freezes. He is paralyzed at the sight
of one of the Guards coming up the stairs. Berrisford backs
away glaring.

Alex GROANS. The Guard rushes over.

GUARD

Jesus. (yelling down the stairs)
Gomez get up here!

He starts helping Alex up by pulling his arm. As they get
Alex up, Berrisford, in a state of shock, backs further up
the stairs. He leans against the wall and puts the gun to
his head. He trembles. He pulls the trigger.

Click.

Click, click, click. Out of bullets. The others are too
busy to be noticing what he is doing. Just as they pull
Cynthia up to the edge, she looks up to see:

Berrisford coming to the railing, and jumping, calmly,
silently.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

GUARD

Holy shit.

Cynthia numbly watches him fall.

She is pulled up and over...

CUT TO:

OVERHEAD -

Cynthia is plopped over onto a gurney. Lights are passing over her. She is being whisked down a hallway. She is descending into a haze of unconsciousness.

DOCTOR'S VOICE (off)

I need 40 units of type
O. This is a code blue detox!

CYNTHIA

It was him...

INT. HALLWAY -

Alex runs alongside the gurney with DOCTORS and NURSES. He clutches bloody bandages to his hand. He is trying to hear her mumblings.

ALEX

It's okay. It's over.

CYNTHIA

It was Dr. Berrisford. He
killed them.

ALEX

I know!

CYNTHIA

It was all in my head.

There is joy through her delirium. She is just able to clasp hands with him briefly before she disappears behind a set of double doors.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A new station wagon whisks along the pretty road.

INT. STATION WAGON -

Alex drives. Cynthia looks at a map. They both look relaxed. They both have bandaged hands.

CYNTHIA

Go right if that's the interstate. Yeah, it is.

ALEX

I thought we were just going to go where the road takes us.

CYNTHIA

Well, the road takes us right at the interstate.

EXT. HIGHWAY -

The wagon makes the right.

INT. WAGON -

Cynthia is searching for something in specific. Alex notices.

CYNTHIA

There! Go back. Turn in there.

ALEX

Where? There was no turn off.

CYNTHIA

Yes there was.

He makes a U-turn and drives back to find a niche in a huge tangle of bushes and trees and weeds. It's barely wide enough for a car.

ALEX

What is this?

(CONT.)

90.

He goes.

THROUGH THE TANGLE -

A tunnel of greenery wretchedly overgrown.

Cynthia and Alex peer around at the ominous leaves and branches gliding past. Cynthia sees something up ahead. So does Alex.

Through the greenery are the charred and overgrown remains of the Unity House. A chiseled sign embedded into a tree verifies it.

ALEX

What in hell are we doing here?

They pull up.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

Cynthia gets out and looks around. She goes to the front entrance. Alex follows her in.

INT. FRONT ROOM -

A mere skeleton of what it was. Daylight pours in through the faded burnt slats of wood. Patches of weeds have sprouted up. Cynthia wanders in and marvels at it all. Only piles of charcoal signify where furniture was.

Alex meanders in from the other end of the house.

ALEX

It was a nice house at one time.

CYNTHIA

Yeah.

ALEX

A man could build this into a fine home.

CYNTHIA

Sure.

She moves out upstairs. He follows her up onto the risky-looking steps.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

ON THE LANDING -

She reaches a point at the top that looks out over the meadow and pond. She looks out. Alex joins her. Cynthia takes in the view contentedly.

CYNTHIA

It's dead.

ALEX

What?

She gestures to the house around them.

Alex smiles. He pulls her close to him. They look into each other's eyes. Neither of them is completely at ease with the other, but there is honest affection. They hug, then kiss.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

It looks almost tranquil. MUSIC UP.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

A file drawer slams closed.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM -

Wasserman hands a file to his youthful ASSISTANT. A COP stands behind them.

An intercom BUZZES.

VOICE (over intercom)

They're here, sir.

WASSERMAN

Send them in.

The door opens into the small room. Berrisford is pushed in on a wheelchair by his lawyer, REYNOLDS. Berrisford is in a cast from the waist up. Cool greetings are exchanged.

WASSERMAN

Dr. Berrisford, pending your recovery you have been charged with two counts of attempted manslaughter, two counts of assault, attempted self-annihilation... well, the malpractice stuff I can't go into...

Berrisford is a blank.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

WASSERMAN

Now as for the five
murder charges...

BERRISFORD

Murder?

WASSERMAN

Pending investigation...

BERRISFORD

I didn't kill anyone. Why
would I do that?

REYNOLDS

Excuse me, I would like to
confer with my client.

Reynolds leans back and whispers in Berrisford's ear. Berrisford
shakes him off.

BERRISFORD

I wouldn't kill anyone. I'm only
interested in knowledge. I'm trying to
probe new regions in the human psyche.
She's a unique girl. She is the product
of an environment and a philosophy
unrivaled in its purity. We need to
understand the depth of her commitment,
and if it means pushing her or anyone
else in that group to the edge, taking
away their precious medication, then
so be it. It's in the name of
knowledge. I am pre-eminent in my
field, detective. But I am not a
murderer.

INT. POLICE STATION CORRIDOR -

Berrisford babbles on as he is wheeled away. Wasserman and
his assistant watch him go.

WASSERMAN

This only proves my theory: the
doctors are sicker than the patients.

ASSISTANT

Do you think he killed them all?

WASSERMAN

Who else would have done it?

INT. UNITY HOUSE -

Cynthia and Alex are still in each other's arms. Cynthia pulls away.

ALEX
What's the matter?

CYNTHIA
I was just thinking about
Gilda. She knew all along.
She kept talking about 'him,'
but I didn't know what she
meant. She said the answer was
inside me. Why would she say
that?

Alex doesn't have an answer. She sighs.

ALEX
Let's go.

CYNTHIA
You go. I'll be out in a minute.
I just want to...

She shrugs, looking around.

ALEX
You sure?

She nods. He goes.

Cynthia gives a final look around at the deteriorated structure and turns down the stairs.

She stands at the top of what remains of the stairs.

WE FOLLOW HER DOWN. Just as she nears the bottom, the TICKING of a clock is audible. It gets louder. Cynthia reaches the last step and turns into

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

We follow her with a continuous PAN. The foyer is new now, completely untouched by fire, just as it was at the beginning of the film. A candelabra is lit.

Cynthia turns and we PAN back to the staircase. It is new, unburnt. Two KIDS come scrambling down the stairs laughing.

The entranceway, the archway to the front room, the staircase are all intact, just as we saw them in the opening scene.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

94.

Cynthia peers into the kitchen. Two WOMEN in work aprons, are kneading bread dough, chopping vegetables. They smile at Cynthia.

WOMAN 1

Cynthia! Are you staying
for supper?

Cynthia is silent, wide-eyed, taking it all in. She turns towards

INT. FRONT ROOM -

She walks in. The room is filled with people. There is a fire in the hearth. Children play. Candles illuminate the space. Unity Members smile and greet her casually as she passes them.

Miriam is talking with a BEARDED MAN intently.

MIRIAM

Cynthia, I'm so glad
you're here.

Ed and Connie are by the fireplace with some others. They smile at Cynthia knowingly.

Lana is sitting contentedly on the window seat reading with some children.

Ralph is crouched with Victor in a corner. They are laughing warmly.

Gilda comes up to her. She is ebullient, happier, healthier-looking than we've ever seen her.

GILDA

Cynthia, it's so wonderful
here, but we miss you
terribly.

Cynthia nears Harris. He smiles at her and kisses her. Everyone in the room turns to her. Harris holds up a shiny and sharp knife with ornamentation on the handle. Cynthia doesn't see it yet.

He puts the pointed tip against her chest.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

HARRIS

It's time, Cynthia.
It's finally time,
isn't it?

EVERYONE

Yes.

Cynthia is lost in a trance.

CYNTHIA

You don't exist.

HARRIS

I wouldn't say that.

He touches her.

HARRIS

Go on. Take the knife.

She can't escape his gaze.

HARRIS

Do it. You want to.

GILDA

You know you do, Cynthia.

HARRIS

If I could show you what
we've seen...

He comes forward.

SOMEONE (off)

You'll see how beautiful
it is.

SOMEONE ELSE (off)

You really will.

Cynthia clasps her hand around the knife at her chest. Harris lets go. She holds it there by herself, completely hypnotized by his words, by his eyes.

MIRIAM

Cynthia, we're only telling
you this because we love you.

Cynthia is about to do it.

(CONT.)

HARRIS

You can't live on your own.
You love us. You need us.

Her grasp tightens around the knife handle. She's trembling.
She takes a deep breath.

CYNTHIA

No!

She jams the knife into Harris' throat and pulls it out.

CYNTHIA

No I don't! I don't love
you! I don't need you!

She is crazed. She flies around the room brandishing the knife
at everyone. They back off.

CYNTHIA

I never loved any of you!
I hate you! I hate you all!
What you did was wrong!

She swats the knife at them all. Victor's arm gets slit. Gilda
has to dive away from her. Cynthia is knocking over lamps and
chairs in her rage. She is crying hysterically.

CYNTHIA

It was WRONG!!!! It was
stupid!

HARRIS (saddened)

Oh Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

I never needed you! Any of
you!

We are tight on Cynthia. She is winding down, crying with her
face buried in her arms.

CYNTHIA

I never did...

She is still. Gradually, the silence fills with a quiet BREEZE.

ALEX (off)

Cynthia?

She drops the knife.

(CONT.)

The knife is all rusty and corroded. The floor is a charred mess.

Cynthia turns around.

Alex comes in the front door. The room is again its empty, skeletal self, blackened and silent.

Cynthia is trembling.

She walks out of the room.

ALEX

Are you alright?

CYNTHIA

Let's go.

ALEX

Okay.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

She stands on the porch, holding onto a post, trying to calm herself. Alex comes out.

ALEX

I'll turn the car around.

As he makes his turn, a gust comes up. The trees are thrashed around. The WIND echoes through the house.

MUSIC UP SOFTLY, EERILY -

Cynthia descends the stairs. The station wagon pulls up. She gets inside.

INT. STATION WAGON -

They pull out. Cynthia is as white as a sheet.

ALEX

Are you sure you're alright?

CYNTHIA

It's just my mind playing tricks on me.

He looks worried, but only slightly. He smiles. Slowly we see Cynthia collect herself. A sense of hope is evident.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

CYNTHIA
It's going to be okay.
I'm going to be okay.

EXT. ROAD -

The car speeds off trailing dust.

We see the Unity House in the distance. The wind kicks up again.

EXT. UNITY HOUSE -

We are closer. Branches and leaves are being tossed around by violent gusts as we move toward the structure.

A teenage GIRL comes running up from the field behind. She is crying. She runs into the house. We follow her.

INT. UNITY HOUSE -

She goes to a far corner and cries some more, angrily, hopelessly.

BOY (far off)
Come on, where are you!?
I hope you're not in that
house... You always get like
this and make stupid threats
that you don't mean!

The Girl peeks out the corner of the window.

ANGLE - The teenage BOY is in the field beyond.

BOY
If you're not here on three
I'm history. Permanently. One...
Two... Three! Fine. Good riddance.

The girl backs away from the window, only more upset now.

A hand touches her shoulder. She whirls around.

GIRL (startled)
Who are you?

HARRIS
A friend. You're upset.

She nods.

(CONT.)

HARRIS

What would you say if I could
promise you eternal bliss?

GIRL

Eternal bliss? What do you
mean?

TRACKING IN on the old knife on the floor. It begins to transform
from its rusty and corroded state into a new and shiny knife.

MUSIC UP.

A burned, skeletal hand reaches into frame and takes it.

CUT TO BLACK.